

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 02238

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, SOCI

SUBJECT: MISSING PERSONS IN CHILE--HUNGER STRIKE

1. MEZVINSKY AND MISOFF RECEIVED THREE OF THE FIVE WOMEN OF A NEW DELEGATION FROM THE GROUP OF RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CHILE ON MAY 30. THAT SAME DAY THEY SPOKE BRIEFLY TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND PRESENTED HIM A LETTER ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT CARTER THAT THEY ASKED HIM TO DELIVER. (MISSION TRANSLATION OF LETTER APPEARS IN LAST PARA.) THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION ARE DUE IN NEW YORK CITY LATE MAY 30. THE GROUP INTENDS TO STAY IN THE US "UNTIL THE HUNGER STRIKE IS RESOLVED, AT LEAST."

2. THEY REPORTED THEY LEFT CHILE ON MARCH 1 AND HAVE BEEN IN EUROPE SINCE THEN. THEY SAID THEY WERE RECEIVED BY A HIGH REPRESENTATIVE AT THE VATICAN AND IN NORWAY, SWEDEN, DENMARK, FRANCE, BELGIUM, AND GREAT BRITAIN BY HIGH GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS. THEY WERE ALSO RECEIVED BY THE PARLIAMENTARIANS INCLUDING IN SPAIN BY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CORTES. WHILE IN THE US THEY INTEND TO SEEK AUDIENCES WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

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3. THEY SAID THEY UNDERTOOK THEIR TRIP BECAUSE THE NEW AMNESTY DECREE HAS CLOSED ALL LEGAL CHANNELS FOR THEM TO PURSUE FURTHER IN CHILE THE SEARCH FOR THE FATE OF THEIR RELATIVES, AND BECAUSE THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET HONORED ITS AGREEMENT OF LAST JUNE UPON THE OCCASION OF THE END OF THE HUNGER STRIKE AT ECLA. THEIR

GROUP IS SEEKING INFORMATION ON THE NAMES ON THE LIST FURNISHED BY THE VICARIA. ALL FIVE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION HAVE MISSING RELATIVES.

4. THEY ASKED THE USG TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOC ON BEHALF OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS, AND URGED THE GOC TO NEGOTIATE AN UNDERSTANDING THAT WOULD PUBLISH THE FATE OF THE PERSONS ON THE VICARIA LIST. THEY CLAIM THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED SOME INDICATIONS THAT SOME OF THE PERSONS ARE STILL ALIVE AND IN SECRET DETENTION CAMPS. THEY EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE MIGHT COST THE LIVES OF SOME OF THE STRIKERS AND SAID THAT IT COULD SPREAD TO ADDITIONAL CHURCHES IN SANTIAGO.

5. IN A SUBSEQUENT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION JUNE 1 BETWEEN MEZVINSKY AND BUFFUM, BUFFUM INDICATED THAT AN ATTEMPT IS BEING MADE BETWEEN THE VICARIA AND THE GOC TO SET UP A COMMISSION ON MISSING PERSONS. THOUGH THE SECRETARIAT WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATING SUCH A COMMISSION, IT WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT WELCOMING SUCH A COMMISSION UPON THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

6. LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER DATED 30 MAY 1978:
(INFORMAL SUMMARY TRANSLATION) LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER FROM FIVE PERSONS WHO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GROUP OF FAMILIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO
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HAVE DISAPPEARED IN CHILE, CALLING HIS ATTENTION TO SITUATION WHICH AFFECTS THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AS WELL AS HUNDREDS OF OTHER CHILEANS WHO WERE ARRESTED BY SECURITY GUARDS OF CHILEAN GOVERNMENT AND THEN DISAPPEARED WITHOUT LEAVING ANY TRACE. STATES SITUATION HAS LASTED FOR YEARS, THAT ALL JUDICIAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED AND THAT GROUP NOW OBLIGED TO ADOPT DESPERATE MEANS BY BEGINNING A HUNGER STRIKE OF INDEFINITE DURATION; STATES STRIKE BEGAN ON MAY 22 IN TEN LOCATIONS, PRINCIPALLY CHURCHES, UNICEF AND RED CROSS SITES. STATES THE ONLY OBJECT OF THE STRIKERS IS TO KNOW THE CONDITION OF THEIR LOVED ONES WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED. ASKS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS WIFE RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUP PERSONALLY SO THAT THEY MAY EXPLAIN THE URGENCY OF THEIR PLEA. SIGNED SOLA SIERRA, PAMELA PEREIRA, MARIA ISABEL ORTEGA, CARMEN VIVANCO AND LINDA MAGALLANES. YOUNG

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